

St. Benedict Parish
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17th April 2022

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

— 1Peter 1:3

Dear Parishioners,

We have traveled together through the valley of the shadow of Passion Week and arrived triumphant beyond the foot of the cross whence hung our salvation. It is my sincere hope that our Lenten sacrifices and the liturgical prayer of the Church during Holy Week have increased our devotion to Our Lord and His Sacraments and enlivened our fervor to do His bidding.

Since my letter of Epiphany, we have advanced towards our goals.

In making these improvements we must acknowledge those who have volunteered their time and skill to make St. Benedict an inviting locus for the Traditional Latin Mass in Fort Worth. With their spirit of cooperation and companionship, they have taken the first steps towards creating the first personal plural I have previously described and informally created the nucleus of a men's group.

On a liturgical note, I would like also to thank Mr. Martinez, our servers, and our choir for their efforts during Holy Week.

I also owe a particular thanks to our Deacon Rev. Mr. Isaac Lind and our seminarian Mr. Samuel Florence for their company and assistance.

Thanks to all their diligent preparations we were able to solemnize Holy Week and express the great depth of our liturgical feeling at the Passion of the Christ.

Please keep them all and particularly the seminarians at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in your prayers.

Now, as we rejoice in the resurrection of the Lord, we take stock.

As you will already know the Supreme Pontiff, Francis, gloriously reigning, has acknowledged that the charism of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter lies outside the application of his *moto proprio Traditionis Custodes*.

This has enabled the Fraternity, with the support of the bishops in this country, including our own Bishop Olson, to continue to provide Mass and the Sacraments in the Extraordinary Form.

Moreover, we eagerly anticipate the visit of Bishop Olson to bestow the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Extraordinary Form upon our young people on 23rd June as a sure sign of his pastoral care for us. We are indebted to Bishop Olson for his continuing support for our parish and for his generosity. (We must always remember that the sense of the first-person plural which we are so keen to establish in the parish of St. Benedict only takes on a truly Catholic meaning when it includes our Bishop and the Magisterium of the Church.)

As we enter Eastertide I wish, once again, to recommend to you the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary now brought more vividly to mind by our new statues. I pray that these images may spur us to greater acts of reparation or function as the tipping point for those not yet ready to dedicate themselves to seeking the promises of Our Lord and Our Lady.

Nevertheless, it is not sufficient for us the rest on our laurels after a successful Holy Week, much remains undone. Improvements, however, are incremental and governed by prudence and a spirit of cooperation.

In my Epiphany letter I wrote of the possibility of a third Sunday Mass. Before committing to such a course however, I would like to take the opportunity to canvas your opinion on this issue to validate some assumptions and seek your support moving forward.

Enclosed in this letter is a link to a brief parish survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GW956WD>

Might I ask that you complete the survey before 31st May 2022. The parish survey is confidential, and the information is for immediate parish administration use only.

On a separate but related topic parish registration has increased since Christmas. We now have 170 families registered in the parish and an average Mass attendance on Sunday of 410 souls.

Our average Sunday collection has also increased to \$8,500. This trend is very encouraging.

Thank you to all of you who have registered and support our parish via the envelope system (although some registered parishioners failed to collect their parish envelopes before Easter and are therefore relegated to the Inactive list.) Your contribution to the parish stays in the parish!

The weekly parish collection is the only source of ordinary income for St. Benedict. This income exclusively pays for the maintenance and administration of the parish. Yet the Sunday collection is comprised of donations from only 40% of registered parishioners. In other words, on average, only sixty-eight families out of a possible one hundred and seventy regularly contribute to St. Benedict. While it is true that some families prefer to make a single large gift at Christmas or Easter and are not reflected in this statistic the main point is that not all registered parishioners are contributing to the wellbeing of the parish.

The fifth precept of the Church is: "You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church." The Catechism notes that this means, "that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability." Whether weekly, monthly, biannually there is an expectation that each registered parishioner will contribute to the material needs of the parish. I

therefore ask you to examine your conscience in this regard as the precepts of the Church are binding in sin.

As stated by Very Rev. Fr. Lawrence F.S.S.P. during his recent visitation to add sufficient Masses and to promote community amongst the Fraternity it is ideal to assign two priests to St. Benedict. This is only possible once our ordinary income (Sunday collections) stabilizes at between \$10,000 and \$13,000 per week.

One easy suggestion for increasing ordinary income is to draw in more registered parishioners thus increasing the number of potential contributions. This however is not possible without placing a greater burden on you given the shortage of available space in both the church and the hall. Therefore, please consider the amount of your giving. Furthermore, until such time as we can satisfy our outstanding loan to the Diocese and demonstrate we have a steady ordinary income of over \$13,000 we are not able to consider building a larger church.

Regardless of this considerable obstacle I hope you will, with a degree of modest pride, recognize the improvements we have made and the potential for further enhancement. You made this happen.

I thank you most sincerely for your support of our parish and trust that together we may make St. Benedict's more worthy of our sacrifices in this life to be able to enjoy the rewards of eternity.

God has bestowed on us high and treasured promises; you are to share the divine nature, with the world's corruption, the world's passions, left behind. And you too have to contribute every effort on your own part, crowning your faith with virtue, and virtue with enlightenment, and enlightenment with continence, and continence with endurance, and endurance with holiness, and holiness with brotherly love, and brotherly love with charity.

-2 Peter 4ff

Yours in Christ

Rev. Fr. Simon Harkins F.S.S.P.

Pastor

St. Benedict